

NSA Programs for Innovation

NSA is seeking innovative ideas, approaches, and technologies to facilitate and enhance all of NSA's various missions. To support these efforts, NSA has established several programs designed for rapid acquisition and engagement on innovation efforts. All companies seeking to do business with NSA must be registered in NSA's ARC. Information about NSA's acquisition programs and opportunities to participate in specific acquisitions is only released through the ARC.

Innovative Mission Capabilities Program (IMC)

The IMC program is limited to small businesses and focuses on innovative ideas and technical capabilities companies can prototype in three months and for a fixed price. IMC is designed to provide companies insight into NSA's mission needs and provide NSA visibility into a company's capabilities while following a rapid acquisition process designed to address the needs of a small company's business model. IMC provides a pathway for companies to effectively and rapidly engage with NSA – even if the company does not currently have security clearances or has not previously worked for NSA because all work is done unclassified and in the company's own facilities.

The IMC program begins each year with the release of the IMC Market Survey via NSA's Acquisition Resource Center (ARC). All companies registered in the ARC receive the program notification and if a company wants to participate, they complete and return the market survey through the ARC. Companies that successfully complete the market survey will receive the IMC Request for Proposals (RFP) when it is released. The RFP identifies numerous topics and technical issues of interest to NSA and also includes opportunities for companies to tell NSA what NSA missed and submit proposals addressing gaps identified by the companies. Companies selected for award receive prime contracts and work with Government technical personnel during the three month contract execution to tailor their prototype to better address NSA's mission needs. All prototypes must be demonstrated at the end of the three months.

Innovations BAA

NSA needs new ways to engage with sources of innovation to take advantage of new developments and advances occurring outside of NSA. The Innovations Broad Agency Announcements (BAA) is a new initiative designed to provide NSA with increased agility to rapidly engage with sources of innovation as technology, world events, and mission requirements evolve and change. The Innovations BAA is open to academia and all companies, regardless of size.

The Innovations BAA is structured to include a number of Special Opportunity Notices, each focused on different types of problems for NSA. Companies and other organizations with expertise in areas covered by a Special Opportunity Notice can submit proposals in response to a specific Special Opportunity Notice. Contract awards will be for firm fixed price contracts limited to 12 months. All information about the Innovations BAA and the Special Opportunity Notices, including the release of new Special Opportunity Notices, is available through the NSA ARC.

IDEAS

IDEAS is another program focused on rapid acquisition of innovation and can be used for basic and applied research, concept exploration, and capability demonstrations. IDEAS is open to academia and all companies regardless of size.

Under the IDEAS program, specific challenge problems are periodically posted to the NSA ARC and companies with expertise in the area respond with proposals about potential solutions. Contract awards to implement the proposed work are firm fixed price contracts and limited to 12 months.